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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *January* the 25th, 1753.

TO the entertainment of my fair readers, and to recommend to them an old-faſhioned virtue, called prudence, I ſhall devote this and a following paper. If the ſtory I am going to tell them ſhould deſerve their approbation, they are to thank the huſband and wife from whom I had it; and who are deſirous, this day, of being the readers of their own adventures.

AN eminent merchant in the city, whoſe real name I ſhall conceal under that of Wilſon, was married to a lady of conſiderable fortune and more merit. They lived happily together for ſome years, with nothing to diſturb them but the want of children. The huſband, who

who ſaw himſelf richer every day, grew impatient for an heir; and as time rather leſſened than encreaſed his hopes of one, he became by degrees indifferent, and at laſt, averſe to his wife. This change in his affections was the heavieſt affliction to her; yet ſo gentle was her diſpoſition, that ſhe reproached him only with her tears; and ſeldom with thoſe, but when upbraidings and ill-uſage made her unable to reſtrain them.

It is a maxim with ſome married philoſophers, that the tears of a wife are apt to waſh away pity from the heart of a huſband. Mr. Wilſon will pardon me if I rank him, at that time, among theſe philoſophers. He had lately hired a lodging in the country, at a ſmall diſtance from town, whither he uſually retired in the evening, to avoid (as he called it) the perſecutions of his wife.

In this cruel ſeparation, and without complaint, ſhe paſſed away a twelve-month; ſeldom ſeeing him but when buſineſs required his attendance at home, and never ſleeping with him. At the end of which time, however, his behaviour, in appearance, grew kinder; he ſaw her oftener, and began to ſpeak to her with tenderneſs and compaſſion.

One morning, after he had taken an obliging leave of her, to paſs the day at his country lodgings, ſhe paid a viſit to a friend at the other end of the town; and ſtopping in her way home at a thread ſhop in a bye-ſtreet near St. James's, ſhe ſaw Mr. Wilſon croſſing the way, and afterwards knocking at the door of a genteel houſe over-againſt her, which was opened by a ſervant in livery, and immediately ſhut, without a word being ſpoken. As the manner of his entrance, and her not knowing he had an acquaintance in that ſtreet, a little alarmed her, ſhe enquired of the ſhop-woman if ſhe knew the gentleman who lived

in

in the oppoſite houſe. " You have juſt ſeen him go in, " madam, replied the woman. His name is Roberts, " and a mighty good gentleman, they ſay, he is. His " lady"—At thoſe words Mrs. Wilſon changed colour; and interrupting her—" His lady, madam!—I thought " that—Will you give me a glaſs of water? This walk " has ſo tired me!—Pray give me a glaſs of water—I am " quite faint with fatigue." The good woman of the ſhop ran herſelf for the water, and by the additional help of ſome hartſhorn that was at hand, Mrs. Wilſon became, in appearance, tolerably compoſed. She then looked over the threads ſhe wanted, and having deſired a coach might be ſent for, " I believe, ſaid ſhe, you were quite fright- " ened to ſee me ſo pale; but I had walked a great " way, and ſhould certainly have fainted if I had not ſtept " into your ſhop.—But you were talking of the gentleman " over the way—I fancied I knew him; but his name is " Roberts, you ſay. Is he a married man, pray?" The happieſt in the world, madam, returned the thread-woman; he is wonderfully fond of children, and to his great joy, his lady is now lying in of her firſt child, which is to be chriſtened this evening; and as fine a boy, they ſay it is, as ever was ſeen. At this moment, and as good fortune would have it, for the ſaving a ſecond doſe of hartſhorn, the coach that was ſent for came to the door; into which Mrs. Wilſon immediately ſtept, after heſitating an apology for the trouble ſhe had given; and in which coach we ſhall leave her to return home, in an agony of grief, which herſelf has told me ſhe was never able to deſcribe.

THE readers of this little hiſtory have been informed that Mr. Wilſon had a country lodging, to which he was ſuppoſed to retire almoſt every evening ſince his diſ-

agreement

greement with his wife; but in fact, it was to his houſe near St. James's that he conſtantly went. He had indeed hired the lodgings abovementioned, but from another motive than merely to ſhun his wife. The occaſion was this.

As he was ſauntring one day through the bird-cage walk in the park, he ſaw a young woman ſitting alone upon one of the benches, who though plainly, was neatly dreſſed, and whoſe air and manner diſtinguiſhed her from the lower claſs of women. He drew nearer to her without being perceived, and ſaw in her countenance, which innocence and beauty adorned, the moſt compoſed melancholy that can be imagined. He ſtood looking at her for ſome time; which ſhe at laſt perceiving, ſtarted from her ſeat in ſome confuſion, and endeavoured to avoid him. The fear of loſing her gave him courage to ſpeak to her. He begged pardon for diſturbing her, and excuſed his curioſity by her extreme beauty, and the melancholy that was mixed with it.

It is obſerved by a very wiſe author, whoſe name and book I forget, that a woman's heart is never ſo brim-full of affliction, but a little flattery will inſinuate itſelf into a corner of it; and as Wilſon was a handſome fellow, with an eaſy addreſs, the lady was ſoon perſuaded to replace herſelf upon the bench, and to admit him at her ſide. Wilſon, who was really heart-ſtruck, made her a thouſand proteſtations of eſteem and friendſhip; conjuring her to tell him if his fortune or ſervices could contribute to her happineſs, and vowing never to leave her, till ſhe made him acquainted with the cauſe of her concern.

Here a ſhort pauſe enſued; and after a deep ſigh and a ſtream of tears, the lady began thus.

"If,

" If, ſir, you are the gentleman your appearance " ſpeaks you to be, I ſhall thank heaven that I have " found you. I am the unfortunate widow of an officer " who was killed at Dettingen. As he was only a lieu- " tenant, and his commiſſion all his fortune, I married " him againſt a mother's conſent, for which ſhe has " diſclaimed me. How I loved him, or he me, as he " is gone forever from me, I ſhall forbear to mention, " though I am unable to forget. At my return to " England (for I was the conſtant follower of his " fortunes) I obtained, with ſome difficulty, the allow- " ance of a ſubaltern's widow, and took lodgings at " Chelſea.

" In this retirement I wrote to my mother, ac- " quainting her with my loſs and poverty, and deſiring " her forgiveneſs for my diſobedience; but the cruel " anſwer I received from her determined me, at all " events, not to trouble her again.

" I lived upon this ſlender allowance with all ima- " ginable thrift, till an old officer, a friend of my huſ- " band, diſcovered me at church, and made me a " viſit. To this gentleman's bounty I have long been " indebted for an annuity of twenty pounds, in quarterly " payments. As he was punctual in theſe payments, " which were always made me the morning they be- " came due, and yeſterday being quarter-day, I won- " dered that I neither ſaw him nor heard from him. " Early this morning I walked from Chelſea to enquire " for him at his lodgings in Pall-Mall; but how ſhall " I tell you, ſir, the news I learnt there!—— This " friend! this generous and diſintereſted friend! was " killed yeſterday in a duel in Hyde-park." She ſtopt here to give vent to a torrent of tears, and then proceeded. " I was ſo ſtunned at this intelligence that I " knew not whither to go. Chance more than choice

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